The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

NOVEMBER, 1950

The Recovery of Faith
By JOSEPH R. SIZOO

The Continuing Mind
By HUGH IVAN EVANS

When God's Men Tackle Difficult Tasks
By LOUIE D. NEWTON

People with Problems
By BERNARD J. BAMBERGER

Fireside Thanksgiving
By LEWIS F. HAVERMALE

Religion in American Life Issue

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*
Garland Evans Hopkins, *Managing Editor*

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Pulpit Calendar

Nov. 1—All Saints' Day.
Nov. 2—All Souls' Day.
Nov. 5—Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 11—Armistice Day.
Nov. 12—Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 19—Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost; Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 23—Thanksgiving Day.
Nov. 26—Sunday before Advent; Stewardship Day.
Dec. 3—Advent Sunday; Day of Dedication and Prayer celebrating the creation of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
Dec. 4-12—Hanukah (Jewish).
Dec. 10—Second Sunday in Advent; Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 17—Third Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 24—Sunday before Christmas; Christmas Eve.
Dec. 25—Christmas.
Dec. 31—Sunday after Christmas; New Year's Eve (Watch Night).
Jan. 1—New Year's Day; Festival of the Christening.
Jan. 5—Twelfth Night; Epiphany Eve.
Jan. 6—Epiphany.
Jan. 7—First Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 7-14—Universal Week of Prayer.
Jan. 14—Second Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 21—Third Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 28—Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

SEASONS: Kingdomtide, Advent and Epiphany.

ALTAR COLORS: Kingdomtide, green; All Saints, white; Advent to Christmas Eve, violet; Christmas through the Epiphany season, white.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of nationwide or denominational significance.)

For the Record—

This November in thousands of towns and cities across the country community attention will be focused on religion and religious institutions. For the second successive year the movement known as Religion in American Life will emphasize the importance of religion in American life by urging all Americans to attend and support the church of their choice. The Pulpit is happy to cooperate in the appeal and dedicates this issue to forwarding the movement.

Religion in American Life has the full cooperation of American business and of the American advertising industry. This year it will again provide intensive national advertising and publicity through the press, radio, television, outdoor billboards, and car cards. Last year it was responsible for 5,200 giant outdoor posters erected on as many billboards across the nation. Five hundred daily and weekly newspapers carried more than 3,000 of its ads. And its message was taken into the homes of millions of Americans by 335 national network radio programs. You probably saw one of the 11,000 cards it was able to place in buses and streetcars. This is witnessing where the unchurched can hardly help seeing or hearing the message.

Religion in American Life is the first movement in history developed solely for the purpose of utilizing the machinery of mass communication in the service of religion. Wide-scale advertising and publicity facilities have been allocated for it during the month of November on a voluntary basis, except for the cost of printing and mailing, through the cooperation of the Advertising Council, the public service organization of American business. The value of the combined promotional activities has been estimated at $400,000. Headed by a national Laymen's committee, of which Charles E. Wilson of General Electric is the chairman, the movement is supported by 21 religious bodies. It is designed to help the preachers of America accomplish the tasks facing them. Be sure to make fullest use of it.

This month's Pulpit will aid you in making your emphasis in your own community. Be sure to read Dr. Anderson's article "On Preaching Stewardship." In fact, you can't afford to miss a word of any of the sermons and articles in this issue.

Our face is red over an error in last month's Pulpit. On page 237, line 36, Dr. Pott's article should read "17 per cent," not "1 per cent." It was bad enough either way.

G.E.H.

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THE PULPIT

CHICAGO
NOVEMBER, 1950

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

IN THE DEATH of Dr. William B. Pugh not only the Presbyterian Church, but the whole of American Protestantism, has lost a great leader. He was the stated clerk of the Presbyterian (U.S.A.) General Assembly, a position whose responsibilities are by no means indicated by its title. In his office rested the responsibility for guiding the operations of the denomination as a whole. He was a master in the field of church order—an ecclesiastic whose career rescued that noble term from a certain invidiousness with which some people use it. His churchmanship extended beyond the boundaries of his own denomination and envisaged the whole Church of Christ. His judgment and advice carried great moral weight in the councils of Presbyterianism and also in the conferences of the ecumenical movement. A familiar figure in all gatherings where Christian unity was the dominant theme, he conceived the ecumenical goal in practical and concrete terms of an actual union of the churches. This spirit was notably displayed in his devotion to the new emerging project for the union of his own denomination with eight others (the Greenwich movement). Here the breadth and high purpose of his churchmanship was notable. His strong stand for attempting nothing less than an organic union of those churches which already "recognize one another's ministries and sacraments," greatly strengthened the faith and hope of his confereres. The forward thrust which he gave this most promising undertaking will gather increasing momentum in the memory of his service to it.

The Passing of a Great Churchman

The Book of the Month

HERE I STAND, A LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER, *by Roland H. Bainton. Abingdon-Cokesbury. $4.75.*

AT THIS SEASON, while we are celebrating the 433rd anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, comes this most scholarly, authoritative and intensely fascinating life of Martin Luther. I made the mistake of starting to read it while in the midst of a heavy assignment of writing, and now my writing is sadly off schedule! This book transported me for days into the very midst of the 16th century. I forgot about the Korean war and often looked up to find my home an unfamiliar place, so vividly did Professor Bainton portray the scene in which this one man stood like a mighty rock while the storm of religious revolution raged about him. The author is a thoroughly objective historian. He lets the story be its own interpreter. He appraised the work of Luther as "the divider of the church, and at the same time the renewer of Christendom." The book will help you to see the great Reformer in the context of his own time. It will explain and partially condone the crudities and vulgarities in his language which Roman Catholic writers delight to magnify. The granitic character of the man stands forth in these pages as excelled only by the tremendous importance of the truth which he defended. The book is skillfully organized to capture and hold you with its story and, without your sensing any break in the drama, to expound the theological and moral insights which were the dynamic of this titanic monk and the Reformation of which we are the inheritors.

A Thought for the Month

ONE of the ruling desires of our human nature is to hand something of value on to the future. We wish to live in our children, to increase their wisdom by our instruction and example. We desire also to leave to our community some increment of happiness or progress which those coming after us will long hold in memory. Our lives always have this forward look. But they also have a backward look. We are debtors to the future, but we are debtors also to the past. We owe much to our children, but we also owe something to our fathers. The past is not dead; it is alive and waits for us to serve it. We are not only descendents but partners with all the great men and women who have gone before us. Their service to mankind is not complete until we have performed our part. The heroes whose deeds are recounted in the Eleventh of Hebrews all died in the hope of our coming, because they without us could not be made perfect. All great men have left their tasks unfinished—they all wait for us to finish their work. Think of Lincoln, for just one example. He left upon us the burden of emancipating the souls of those whose bodies he set free. There is a great cloud of witnesses in the amphitheater watching eagerly as we run our race. They have a stake in our performance. Even Jesus' life was not complete. It is our inspiring task to complete it. Paul calls the life of Christ an unfilled cup, and declares that the ruling passion of his own life is to fill to the brim the cup of his Master's suffering! This also is our high calling. Unless we take up the redemptive work of Christ in fellowship with him, his life remains forever incomplete.

Our Debt to Our Fathers

Charles Clayton Morrison

The Recovery of Faith

By JOSEPH R. SIZOO

And he went out, not knowing whither he went. Heb. 11:8

THE greatest single need of our time is the recovery of faith. We seem to be overwhelmed today with an anxiety complex. We are like people who walk on streets which have no foundation and live in houses which do not shelter. Life has become so complex and complicated that we have become entangled with our own ennui. There walk across the pages of the New Testament gallant and brave spirits who had about them dash and color, who faced misgivings and uncertainties with a divine nonchalance. One does not often come upon people like that today.

We are losing faith in ourselves. In going up and down the country I find increasing numbers of people who are crushed by frustration. They have made themselves believe that they do not count and that there is no place for them in the world. They are quite sure they are of no consequence and they have lost the sense of their significance. All meaning has gone out of their lives. Great movements are surging through the world, but they will never advance them. Mighty tides are tumbling to the shores of time, but they are only drifting farther out to sea. They are convinced that it doesn't matter whether they rise or fall, gain or lose, sink or swim, live or die.

DEFINING LIFE

I recall sitting one evening with Clarence Darrow in Washington where I had come to know him. He turned to me rather sharply and said, "I will give you my definition of life. Life to me is an unpleasant interlude of nothingness." Many have come to accept that definition of life for themselves. It has made them cynical and bitter. Now there is nothing more tragic in all the world than to lose faith in oneself. It is one thing to fall in the esteem of others, but it is a far different thing to fall in your own esteem. It is one thing to lose your reputation, but it is infinitely more terrible to lose your self-respect. We were born to fly like eagles, yet we act like sparrows.

JOSEPH R. SIZOO is president of New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Born in the Netherlands, he came to the United States when a boy of seven. Ordained to the ministry of the Reformed Church in America, he has served as pastor of some of America's greatest churches. Among them were New York Avenue Presbyterian, Washington, and St. Nicholas Collegiate (Reformed), New York.

Then, too, we are losing faith in one another. This is one of those times when the air waves are crackling with insinuations and innuendoes. Charges and countercharges are as common as cranberries on Cape Cod bog land. This is the hour of the character assassin. Just at a time when we should be holding fast to one another, trusting one another and closing our ranks to show the world that in a democracy people do live together for the common good, we are tumbling apart into brittle groups, each seeking advantage at the expense of the other. The only thing this accomplishes is to give comfort and aid to the enemy, whose philosophy is "divide and conquer." Let a man stand up and warn the nation of this peril and he is immediately branded as subversive.

One meets this distrust of one another in places where one least expects to find it—in religion. What was meant to unite men has often divided them; what was designed to draw people closer together has often led only to further estrangement. We seem to be at war with ourselves, fighting one another. We hate a shade of truth more than we hate error. We seem to build walls instead of windows, barricades instead of bridges. The church is hurt by this unremitting distrust of one another.

CYNICISM IS RAMPANT

What is even more significant and sobering is that we are losing faith in a better world. We are part of a generation which is drenched with cynicism. You often hear it said, "Good will is a beautiful idea, but it won't work; kindness is a gracious virtue, but you must never expect it to accomplish anything." Many have come to believe that you must accept things as they are, knowing they can never be altered. Hunger will always gnaw, pain will always ravage, misery will always prevail, ignorance will always have a toehold, and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse will always ride. You meet that attitude of cynicism and frustration at both ends of life. Not long ago I was in conversation with a rather well known person who is very old. She said, "Thank God, I am old and won't have to face this hopeless world much longer." A few weeks later, as I walked across the campus of a university with a group of students, one of them said, "Why are you so interested in building a Christian order? Tomorrow comes the revolution when G.I. Joe and Ivan will be sleeping side by side in the same frozen trenches in Alaska or Siberia." One of the tragedies of today is that many are losing faith in the possibility of building something better.

In this country we have a way of boasting about our might. We are supposed to be the most powerful nation on earth and possess fabulous wealth. Indeed, the Internal Revenue Department has announced that many

Americans possess untold wealth. There are in our hands amazing resources of human and natural power. We have the know-how. Our technical skill and genius are the marvel of all the people of earth. And yet, strangely enough, we are among the most unstable, uncertain and often hysterical. Many seem to think they have to walk the streets with a Geiger counter to detect hidden bombs planted across our path.

When the century began we were quite sure of ourselves. Herbert Spencer's philosophy of the inevitability of progress we had accepted as final. In every way and every day we were getting better and better. Civilization was thought of as a chambered nautilus, climbing in a spiral ascent from one spacious room to another, until at last we should reach the "dome more vast" where we would experience complete freedom and prosperity. One does not find much of that today. We are not so sure of ourselves at this moment, and not many are sitting in the seats of self-confidence. The dream of grandeur was apparently greater than the grandeur of the dream. The story of the last fifty years has not been of an upward ascent, but more often of a descent into darkness and confusion. There is no great reason for boasting when we are reminded by historians that the European nations alone fought more than seventy-four wars in the first thirty years of the 20th century. There is little occasion for cheering when we are informed that if all the people on the North American continent were suddenly swept away by some cruel force of nature they would not equal in number the people who have died by reason of the wars fought in the first half of the century.

But are we to believe that nothing better can come to pass? Is all this travail and search for truth, freedom and justice to be in vain? Does the highway of the King of kings lead us only to a blind alley? Has God given us life only to mock us? Is this to be the final end of those who give the last full measure of devotion? Does the road have no turning? Is this what the Creator of the world has brought us to? Believe me, there are two perils which have always confronted civilization. One is the peril which comes in the hour of prosperity, the other is the peril which comes in the day of adversity. Now the peril of prosperity is arrogance, but the peril of adversity is cowardice. We are in desperate need of the recovery of faith.

A BETTER DAY

Those who have been as lights in their several generations never took counsel of fear. In every century and country there have arisen remarkable men whose depth of understanding, clarity of vision and courageous imagination have led mankind out of slavery and darkness into freedom and light. They addressed themselves to the building of a better day. They refused to accept as final issues which were evil. They burned their bridges behind them for they believed that the stars in their courses were fighting for them. It may have been that there was a new continent to discover, a new law to be written, a new cure to be found, a new political technique to be established, or a new truth to be revealed. Like wise men of old they went out patiently and insistently believing that one day the star would halt over the Bethlehem of a better world.

In the forefront of all these gallant souls stands Abraham. He obeyed the call of God who said, "Get thee out of thy country unto a land that I will show thee." He did not turn his back upon that vision. Years later someone looked back upon his life and wrote of it, "He went out, not knowing whither he went." Abraham saw his world tumbling apart. It was rotting at the core because it had no moral content. He knew that such a civilization had no future. He resolved to find some better way for those who would come after him. He committed himself to an adventure which may not always have been clear to him. He dedicated himself to the vision and faced the unknown. He did not know whether he was traveling an open road or a blind alley, a highway or a dead-end street. He became a restless wanderer until at last he stood on the fringes of the Land of Promise. He never realized his dream, for the only land he ever owned was a grave at Machpelah. That story has lived through the tumbling centuries, burning like a torch and shining like a star. It has been a beacon of hope and courage to all who dared adventure for light and truth. It stands as the eternal witness to the power of faith to make men face the unknown.

Something of that must happen to our time again. The hope of the world is in the hands of those who with a brave faith have courage to face the unknown.

RESOURCES OF FAITH

Every individual who has dedicated himself to some high purpose or service outside of himself belongs to that gallant group. It is a way of life which makes one eager, alert and expectant. You are not sure where it will lead. All you know is that there is some poverty which must be relieved, some ignorance which must be conquered, some truth which must be established. One thinks of that day when Pastor Robinson kneeled with a small band of pilgrims on the cobblestones of Leyden assuring them "that God has yet greater things to reveal of himself." Life on that basis becomes thrilling adventure.

I recall one day broadcasting with Albert Einstein. Before the broadcast began, sitting with him alone, I told him that it was, to me, a great honor to be on the same program with him. He almost blushed, then with a delicious smile and a twinkle in his eyes said to me, "I always try to keep the door open a little and now and again peek behind the curtain." There is nothing more wonderful than to face life with an adventurous faith.

That way of life, however, is never easy; it is full of hazards. It may well be that in some hour when you least expect it some heartbreak will explode in your face, some anguish will catch up with you or some evil may seek to rub you out. The world spends half of its time praying for deliverers and the other half in nailing them to the cross. But one canot bargain with faith. The moment you draw the line somewhere beyond which you will not go, it ceases to be faith and you live with expediency. The life that protects itself behind iron curtains has no future. Iron curtains of whatever

nature are not symbols of faith, but symbols of defeatism. "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

You say to me that is all very well, but how can I obtain this faith and what are its sources? It is rather significant that an age which has disavowed moral and spiritual values is haunted by frustration. So much of what passes for modern culture is only an attempt to push God beyond the world which he made. Everything today is judged on the horizontal level, until we have produced a mechanistic civilization which dances to the watch cry of Karl Marx: economic determinism. We have come to believe that steam shovels and chromium-plated doorknobs and atomic energy and hydrogen bombs will bring in a new heaven and a new earth. This current disavowal of values has created a moral vacuum into which communism is rushing with its frightening and ruthless power.

To such a world comes the man who lives with an unfaltering faith in an unfailing God. He is convinced with Lincoln that things are never settled until they are settled right. He is convinced that what holds the world together is not chemistry, but spirituality; not blind chance, but eternal purpose. Living with this unfaltering faith means that history is coming out somewhere, for history belongs to God. It means that God is still God, Christ is still Christ, and love is still omnipotent. Issues in which God has a stake may be deferred and postponed, but they can never be defeated. It means that truth is more beautiful than falsehood, that giving is more divine than getting, that sharing is more eternal than hoarding. Not Corsica but Galilee, not Pilate but Paul, not Judas but Jesus have the last word.

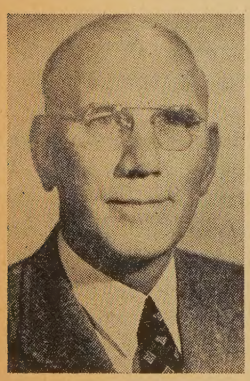
I recall a conversation I had many years ago with William Jennings Bryan. He knew that many people violently disagreed with him in many of his convictions. He turned to me and quoted one of his favorite sentences of the New Testament: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." Then he said, "Many may question whether I have fought a good fight; many more may question whether I have finished my course, but no one can question but that I have kept the faith." Hold fast to that, to the end of the end. You can act as if you have nothing to lose and you can live as though nothing can throw you. You will write as though angels guided your hand and sing as though choirs invisible warbled in your soul. "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God."

The Continuing Mind

By HUGH IVAN EVANS

Let this mind be in you . . . Phil. 2:5

SOME time ago a sentence sprang into prominence as I read George Sampson's epilogue to the *Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.* This sentence has haunted me for a long time. Now that I look at the affairs of the Kingdom of God through the eyes of the moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the sentence is filled with deeper meaning. Here is the sentence: "So it might be well if we heard a little less of the modern mind and a little more of the continuing mind."



The idea of a continuing mind intrigues the thinker who sees the passing show of world events absorbing the minds of men. The world listens on its radio for something new. It follows the suggestion of another that the quest is not for that which is new and good but for that which is "news" and bad. There is a kind of unconscious pagan quest for originality.

It is in the face of this tendency in our day that one feels inclined to make an appeal for the great values of tradition. To us Professor Sampson's words, "Tradition may be not an impediment but an enablement," are encouraging since, fortified by tradition and by great example, the adventurer can set forth intrepidly toward unknown shores.

VALUE IN TRADITION

This is affirmed with the full realization that most men today would accept the thesis, "I would rather see where I am going than know where I have been." Such a mental attitude forgets that the only way we can see where we are going is by knowing where we have been. The continuing mind would therefore be the mind that would accept tradition with all its accumulated values, and enrich it. One may do three things with tradition: disregard it entirely, simply reproduce it, or build upon it and enrich it.

The modern mind would break loose from the past and start to learn all the lessons of life over again. The timid mind would accept tradition and do nothing to change it at all—leave it just as it is.

It is my concern in this discussion to present a con-

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tinuing mind which will conserve all the values of the past and make them available not only in the solution of the problems of the present but as a safeguard for future endeavor.

The task, therefore, of the continuing mind is: First, to gather up in itself the tradition of Christian culture and hold fast that faith which was once delivered to the saints. Second, to enrich that faith by honest thought, worthy example, and superb leadership. Teachers under this impulse would stimulate the minds of students with a due regard always for the deposit of truth. Third, to attack courageously all false philosophy and make war on pagan theories which, denying the past, seek to debase the position of man.

Such an attack would be accompanied by a clear and potent statement on the mind's respect for the Christian concept of man, the Christian concept of God, and the Christian concept of society.

One sees at once that the continuing mind would be prepared to depend on and expand the idea of the sacredness of the individual in the concept of man; then to proclaim the absolute in man's concept of God and develop the program of redemption under the Kingdom of God as the Christian concept of society.

AN UPLIFTING CONCEPT

The Christian concept of man lifts that which is mortal into the realm of the immortal. Man is seen as the finest handiwork of his Creator. But the Christian concept also sees him as the object of divine redemption. The continuing mind will never forget that we are "bought with a price." This produces a strange paradox in man's thinking. He is but a little lower than the angels and is the sinner for whom Christ died. He may approach God with all the assurance that his unique position implies and yet continue to be so humble that he accepts the will of God without a murmur.

It is this concept of man that needs to be restated today. Perhaps St. Paul had it in mind when he said, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Humble obedience unto the will of God seems to be an essential condition of the exaltation of man's life. Only as man stands in this peculiar relationship with God is he able to attain the stature to which he may grow. The sacredness of the human soul in the Christian concept is the content of the continuing mind.

If we forget this important factor in the concept of man, we are in a position to become victims of the false and pagan philosophies which have gripped millions today. Seeing each person as a child of God will make all the difference in the world in our treatment of each other.

The concept of God as the absolute is another content of the continuing mind. God is absolute truth and right. This is the basic concept of God. This is not a matter of relativity. Such a concept is repeated many times in the Gospels. Jesus answered the man who inquired, "How much shall I give?" with an absolute "Go sell *all* that you have and give." There was no compromise nor bargaining in what God required of his disciples.

Peter asked, "How often shall I forgive?" Jesus answered with the absolute, " 'Seventy times seven' is not enough. There must be no limits placed on forgiveness."

Men asked Jesus, "Shall a man put away his wife?" And Jesus answered, "The ideal is, they twain shall be one flesh." You wreck the moral order when there is even one case of putting away.

These illustrations call attention to the fact that while man is mortal, shortsighted and given to bargaining, God is absolute. He requires complete honesty, nothing short of the truth, and a standard of right that grows out of the nature of God himself.

A NEW REASSURANCE

Such a concept restored to the mind of man today would have the effect of a new reassurance that we gain if we do not compromise with evil. The moral law remains inflexible because it is based upon the character of God himself. This is the antidote to the poison of expediency and bargaining which has taken hold of a large portion of the earth's inhabitants.

The continuing mind holds to Jesus' concept of the Kingdom of God as the ideal for society. The Christian prays, "Thy Kingdom come." He wants this Kingdom not merely for himself as an individual, but for the society of which he is a part. When once Christian society has approached the ideal of the Kingdom of God, we will be on our way to world peace and the outlawry of war.

One of the most intriguing studies forced upon me during this year is that of the causes which have produced various denominations. It came rather as a surprise to discover that all were seeking the Kingdom of God when they set up the divisions into which Christianity has been plunged. But many groups of Christians were thrown together not because of ecclesiastical differences but because of sociological, geographical and economic differences. To study the contributing factors to disunity among Christians is to become convinced that other causes than the quest of the Kingdom of God have been at work.

In the study of regional synods with our own denomination, one is made aware of how many conflicting issues arise that are not primarily identical with the principles of the Kingdom for which Christ instructed us to pray.

Above all, the continuing mind will never forget that love never fails. Human society needs preaching that will remind all worshipers of the unchangeable love of God for mankind. God's unchangeable love for man is the great reason why we should love each other —"because he first loved us." To restore this mind to the church will assure everyone that the economic and social pattern which succeeds must be fashioned out of a love which never fails.

If we follow the suggestion of a great scholar, we will resolve with all our hearts that the Christian religion shall never go off the gold standard in its concept of man, God and society. This will mean a new dedication to the simple concepts of Jesus' teaching. It may mean for many people that the new occasions will teach old duties.

When God's Men Tackle Difficult Tasks

By LOUIE D. NEWTON

Now, therefore, give me this mountain . . . if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said. Josh. 14:12

CALEB, son of Jephunneh, played tackle on God's first team. The historians agree that Caleb was a foreigner by birth, a proselyte, incorporated into the tribe of Judah. We can trace him back to Caleb, son of Hezron, son of Pharez (I Chron. 2:9-50). The name Caleb means "capable."

We first meet this fascinating man in Numbers 13:6 where the Lord is designating his varsity squad for the difficult task of searching out the land of Canaan. Caleb and Joshua brought back a favorable report. The rest of the team reported adversely. They had seen the sons of Anak, "which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 13:33).

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." Then came Joshua to stand by Caleb, and together they said: "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not" (Num. 13:30-14:9).

GOD'S PROMISE

Turn now to Numbers 33, and you witness the dramatic scene of the children of Israel encamped in the plains of Moab on the banks of the Jordan, near Jericho. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places . . . for I have given you the land to possess it. . . . But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them."

And the Lord named Caleb as the captain of his team to divide out the land unto the children of Israel (Num. 34:19). Then follow the instructions for dividing the land, and the manner in which they were to possess it. "Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel" (Num. 35:34).

God's promises concerning Canaan, like all his promises, were conditional. If the children of Israel were to possess the land, they must do so on God's terms. If we today hope to possess the land that is set before us, we must "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness."

Impressive, indeed, is the lesson here set forth: that God has chosen to work through men, if he can find men who will play on his team. Such men are hard to find. Note that the percentage in the case of the spies was ten to two—ten men who doubted that God could do what he said, and only two who wholly believed God. And yet God holds to his plan of working through men. The solemn truth of this formula has been grandly stated by Josiah Gilbert Holland in these familiar lines:

God give us men. The time demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and willing hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking.

Such a man was Caleb. And how to account for Caleb is the answer to the most vital question confronting America today. The answer is found in Caleb's own words: "But I wholly followed the Lord my God" (Josh. 14:8). Leadership in business, in statecraft, in education, in religion is our acknowledged need today. And we need not look for such leadership apart from humble and faithful trust in the Lord.

GOD'S PURPOSE

Dwelling yet further upon the essential truth that God works through yielded, obedient, willing men, let us fully understand that God has a purpose which he will ultimately carry out in his world. I do not shy from the principle that this is God's world, albeit we recognize the spurious claim of Satan as ruler in the

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realm of darkness which sin has let down upon God's world. I rejoice in the verdict pronounced by Jesus: "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). Maltbie D. Babcock expresses it beautifully in these lines:

This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world,
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas—
His hands the wonders wrought.

Yes, this is my Father's world, even the physical universe—his by right of creation, his by right of preservation; and we kneel with poets before his handiwork. But there is more to be said, nor does Babcock leave it unsaid. Follow him:

This is my Father's world,
O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world,
The battle is not done.
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and heaven be one!

God did not create his world as a mere habitation for dragons and a court for owls. He created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited by men who delight to do his will, nor will he be satisfied until he see of the travail of his soul.

MATCHING MOUNTAINS AND MEN

Which leads us on to our text: "Now, therefore, give me this mountain." Tremendous words, you must agree. Caleb knew what it was that awaited him in Hebron—the sons of Anak, men like unto giants, men who regarded the sons of God as grasshoppers. Caleb had been there. He had seen these mighty men. He knew their background. He had appraised their resources. He had made inventory of their assets. The name Anak means "collar." Fighting men through the ages have been thought of as those who "collar"—choke, destroy, kill.

Caleb not only knew about the Anakims generally, but he knew specifically about the current leader, one Arba, mighty son of Anak, sometimes described as possessing the strength of four mighty men. But none of these things bothered Caleb. He asked for Hebron. Let the younger men have the easy jobs. "Give me this mountain!"

Caleb was now eighty-five years old. He had been matching himself with mountains of difficulty for at least four and a half decades—as far back as the destiny-determining day at Kadesh-barnea, when Moses sent him forth to search out the land of Canaan. Moses had promised Caleb that day that he would some day inherit the land, and Caleb had been faithful to the covenant which he entered into at Kadesh-barnea—a covenant with the Lord. "Now, therefore, give me this mountain"! Canaan would have been subdued in vain if it had not been inhabited. Caleb was ready to match himself, with God's help, against the mighty mountain of the sons of Anak. "If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said. And Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron became therefore the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh, because that he wholly followed the Lord. . . . And that land had rest from war."

Theodore Parker, in a sermon on the immortal life, September 20, 1846, made this revealing statement: "All men desire to be immortal." Parker went on to show how men across the ages have sought immortal roles of greatness—some through physical prowess, some through the power of knowledge, some through the vain lusts of the flesh. And while we recognize this deep yearning on the part of every sentient soul for lasting fame in the wide scope of human endeavor, we must conclude with Solomon that there is but one road, one royal road to greatness, and that road is the battle-scarred, blood-stained way of the cross.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," said Solomon in the closing words of his valedictory. "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccles. 12:14).

Caleb desired the inheritance of the Lord, and he was willing to pay the last full measure of devotion in winning the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. "Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea," he reminded Joshua. "And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years. . . . Now, therefore, give me this mountain."

Thus did Caleb choose immortal greatness. Only let us catch the secret of his great commitment—"If so be the Lord will be with me." I seem to see grand old Caleb, eighty and five years old, kneeling yonder on the plains of Moab, his face and hands uplifted to God, as if inspiring the painting by Dürer, and the lines of Charles Wesley:

Father, I stretch my hands to thee;
No other help I know;
If thou withdraw thyself from me,
Ah, whither shall I go?

Author of faith, to thee I lift
My weary, longing eyes;
O may I now receive that gift!
My soul, without it, dies.

Long enough have we looked at Caleb of old. Turning now from the epitaph, written by the finger of God, "And the land had rest from war," let us face the implications of the stirring saga of Caleb's work for God, namely, men for today's mountains!

Nor do I ask anyone to go through a labored catalogue of our times—the myriad tokens of a day beset with secularism, humanism, materialism, selfishness, complacency and idolatry, ominous tendencies and trends of thought and behavior that afford ready ground

for the ever alert demons of hell that spawn their seeds of death. Well may we examine this phase of the American scene as furnishing communism an advantage in its purpose to destroy our way of life. I have no fear of communism if we have enough men and women like Caleb. Without such men and women to match today's mountains, the future of our country is wrapped in the same shrouds which have marked the passing of all nations that have forgot God.

I have faith to believe that we shall witness today a great awakening in which men of God will rise up to match the mountains of difficulty round about us—mountains now held by the mighty sons of Anak, mountains obscured by the mists of shallow thinking, mountains magnified by the fallacies of secularism, mountains infested with the mines of Marxian suicide. But we can master these mountains only as we rise in the strength of the Lord—as we come again into the courts of Zion, bringing our troubles to the Lord, lifting up hands of repentance and hearts of contrition. I like the way William P. Merrill puts it in these lines:

Rise up, O men of God!
Have done with lesser things;
Give heart and soul and mind and strength
To serve the King of kings.

Rise up, O men of God!
The church for you doth wait,
Her strength unequal to her task:
Rise up and make her great!

WHEN GOD SHAKES THE WORLD

Milton, in his *Areopagitica,* declared:

> When God shakes a kingdom with strong and healthful commotions to a general reforming, 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing; but yet more true it is, that God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities, and more than common industry, not only to look back and revise what hath been taught before, but to gain further and go on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth. For such is the order of God's enlightening his church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it.

As God shakes the world, let us draw ever nearer and nearer unto him, lifting up hands of prayer and hearts of faith, that we may truly behold the cloud of witnesses, laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and give the more heed to Paul's admonition:

> Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet. . . . Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God. . . . And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. . . . See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. . . . Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12).

And as we face the mountains of prejudice and selfishness and ignorance and covetousness and greed and intolerance and hate and fear and all the ills to which the sinful heart of man is subject, let us, with Caleb-trust, heed the words of Jesus, when he declared: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

We do lift up our drooping hands, and our hearts are strengthened as we contemplate the dawn of a better tomorrow—a tomorrow in which God's men shall match the mountains of doubt and despair, a tomorrow in which men of today like Caleb of old will rise up in the strength of the Lord to drive out the sons of Anak, a tomorrow when every hill and valley shall have rest from war. Hasten that day, O Lord, to thy glory and dominion, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer

By R. E. ESHMEYER

THE brook's course reminded me of a coin necklace: a few pools connected by a narrow ribbon of running water. I selected a pool and sat down to study it. This pool had a diameter of five feet or so, and a depth, between the odd shapes of flat limestone rocks, of perhaps a foot. Clear water. No living thing to be seen.

The vibrations made by my walking had ceased when I sat down. The moving reflections of my body also had stopped. Save for the presence of a new blur on the bank, to which inhabitants of the pool would soon adjust themselves, the even flow of life was for them completely restored.

The first sign of life was a small crayfish that came slowly out of hiding. Then another. In a few seconds I counted a dozen, and as many creek chubs.

Then appeared a miller's thumb or fresh water sculpin, about four inches long. The sculpin's eyes are almost on a level with the top of its flat head. Its body tapers to a thin tail, but the caudal fin is wide, like an opened fan. I had never before seen a sculpin in its native habitat. It was a rare treat.

Later on, as I pondered the whole matter, it occurred to me that I had paid an admission charge to this wild-life performance—the price charged by all wild creatures.

The price is motionless silence.

It is the same admission price one pays to gain a sense of God's presence. The religious experience is as simple and as natural as that experience of mine with the fishes.

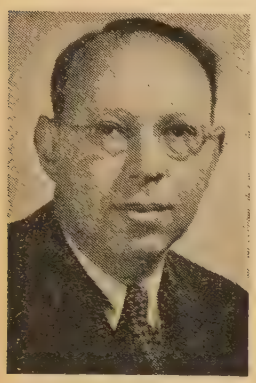
What is prayer but silent expectation turned to God? What answer to prayer could possibly be greater than a consciousness of God's presence?

Silent expectation does it.

People with Problems

By BERNARD J. BAMBERGER

TO LIVE, someone has said, means to have problems. Indeed we seldom feel more keenly alive than when we face a challenge that calls forth all our intelligence, determination and fighting instinct. Few of us, however, sigh for such vitalizing challenges—they come of their own accord with embarrassing frequency! The problem we solve is quickly replaced by a new one. Sometimes what we supposed was the solution of a problem proves to be merely its restatement in a new form. Too often, instead of being an exhilarating summons to action, our problems are a heavy load, an unbearable and deadly strain. The complexity and speed of modern life intensify these pressures. The story of those who crack up physically or mentally is familiar to us all.



Small wonder then that a movement designed to stimulate the practice of religion should this year have adopted the slogan: "Take your problems to church this week—millions leave them there." The word "church" is here used as a generic term for all houses of worship, including the synagogue. The slogan asserts that we profit not merely by going to the place of public worship, but by consciously bringing our problems with us. This is a claim worth examining. For though we vary greatly among ourselves in the extent of our religious interest and activity, and in the frequency with which we take part in public worship, this is true of us all: we are people with problems.

And most of the problems that weigh us down are not like the problems our teachers set us at school or the more difficult problems that confront the scientific or scholarly researcher. Intellectual problems—those that call for the gathering of knowledge, the analysis of facts, the forming and testing of theories—are important, but they seldom cause us to lose sleep. The problems that worry us are much more personal and practical. They rarely come to us in the form: What shall I think? Usually they involve the question, What shall I do? or, Shall I do anything? or even, Can I do anything?

It is impossible to enumerate these problems, which cover every phase of life, above all our relation to other human beings. They include the questions of family life, the relations of husband and wife, of parents and children; the questions of education and the choice of a career, of business and professional advancement and conflict; the challenges of success and of disappointment; the making and saving and spending of money; the adjustment to sickness and age. And so we might go on indefinitely with a mere listing of the kinds of problems that meet us through life.

But here we are considering the question: What good does it do to bring our problems, whatever they are, to the house of God? And for our purpose, these problems fall into four general groups.

I

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" asks the prophet. I dare say there is no more proper offering for the altar of God than our fears, our troubles, our needs. With God we can afford to be honest; we need not be ashamed to pour out before him whatever is disturbing our hearts. But if we do so, we are bound to notice that many of our anxieties and difficulties, though we get highly wrought up about them, are hardly of the caliber for presentation before the divine throne.

A few years back the newspapers published the photograph of a public meeting held in Brooklyn to pray that the Dodgers might win the pennant. To most of us such a procedure seems pitifully childish. Yet our own souls are sometimes shaken by issues no less trivial. We can often distinguish between the great concerns of life and the little ones by applying the test of prayer. The problem that is not worth praying about is not a big problem. In this place, dedicated to the high and holy purposes of life, many of our difficulties appear as greatly inflated. We relax and smile, and ask ourselves: Why was I so upset about this?

II

But though the flimsy troubles that only *seemed* to be problems float away like froth on the surface of a stream, the solid problems remain. What can be accomplished by bringing them here? I can promise you no universal formulas, no magic results. If a problem can be solved by push-button methods, it couldn't have been much of a problem ever. There are no blueprints that cover all cases. And yet, when we bring our problems here, we can tap rich and important resources.

There is the atmosphere of tranquillity and calm, which releases some of our tensions and helps us to face our problems with greater sanity and balance of spirit.

There is the treasure of age-old wisdom contained in the Scripture and tradition that are read and expounded here—a wisdom rich and profound that often

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will supply a clue for the solution of our problems.

And in both the ministry and the membership of congregations there are friendly and unprejudiced men and women who can listen with sympathetic understanding. Many of them have experience and competence in personal counseling, and may help you better to grasp the nature of your difficulty and to find the way to an answer.

Besides, a problem can be solved on more than one level. You may at the moment be thinking of nothing but how to get out of an immediate jam—but you are going to have to live with yourself long after the present crisis is past. The practical course is not practical very long if it is an unrighteous course. As a matter of fact, many of our problems do not stem from ignorance or confusion. We may know very well what to do, what we ought to do, what God wants us to do. The problem results from the conflict between that knowledge and our timid or selfish inclination to do something else. To solve our problems on the best and most thoroughly human basis, to gain the strength of purpose and clarity of vision to make the best decision, we do well to come here and pray: "Show me thy ways, O Lord, lead me in thy truth."

III

But what of the questions to which there is no answer, the situations where there is nothing to do? Life brings frustrations, pains, sorrows, bereavements that cannot be reversed. What good does it do to bring our agonies here, if we must take them with us when we go out again?

It is part of the common wisdom of humanity that what cannot be cured must be endured, that we must accept with the best grace we can muster such troubles as are beyond correction. But there is a vast difference between a numb, pagan submission to inevitable fate and a steadfast faith in the living God. In this place we receive the assurance that we are not alone. Through the Psalmist, God declares, "I am with him in trouble." The burden does not grow quickly light. Much remains that is hard to understand and harder to accept. But we draw strength from the conviction that God knows and God cares; that though his purposes are dark to us, they are not dark to him; that his love abides with us; that not even death is the last word. "Day by day he beareth our burden."

IV

And so I believe there is substance and wisdom in the slogan, "Bring your problems to church this week." But a word of caution must be added about the second part of the slogan, "millions leave them there." The statement is true and proper, but not complete. For the house of God is not only a place where we lay down burdens, but also a place where we take up burdens. If the harried individual is to find relief here, he must be able to count on human sympathy as well as on divine compassion. For what else is human sympathy than a manifestation of the divine compassion?

We begin to understand that God cares when we realize that another human being cares. Public worship is the joining of men and women in a common aspiration, the sharing of joy and pain, of need and hope, the assumption of burdens *together*. But we soon perceive that this fellowship cannot be merely intramural —the interchange of personal sympathy and help among the members of the congregation, excellent as that is. For the problems of the individual cannot be severed from the problems of society—of labor and industry, wealth and poverty, race and class conflict, education, clean government, national rivalries and world peace.

We come here to pray for ourselves, and rightly. But we cannot pray for ourselves alone. In the house of God, we hear the prophetic summons to universal justice and brotherhood. We learn to set our personal problems in the framework of the world's needs, and to consider our troubles in the light of all human suffering. We no longer feel ourselves to be isolated individuals struggling against a lonely fate, but members of a consecrated fellowship striving for the Kingdom of God.

Once more, no magical, effortless, instantaneous results can be promised. It takes practice to master the most simple game. Can the art of prayer be acquired with less application? But let us make a beginning. Let us open our hearts in unqualified honesty, and lay our problems on the altar of God, seeking his help, his commandment and his loving company. And then surely the day will come when you will confess with deepest gratitude: "I was glad when they said unto me: Let us go unto the house of the Lord."

Who Will Build the World Anew?

By THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

Who will build the world anew?
  Who will break tradition's chains?
Who will smite the power of gold?
  Who will chant the spirit's gains?

War and hatred, let them go!
  Caste and creed have had their day;
Pride and lust will lose their power—
  Who will find the better way?

Who will preach that might is weak?
  Who will teach that love is power?
Who will hail the reign of right?
  This his day and this his hour.

Faithless priests and warring lords
  Are as Babylon and Tyre,
Making way for prophet hosts
  Shouting truth in words of fire.

Who will live to slay the false?
  Who will die to prove the true?
Who will claim the earth for God?
  Who will build the world anew?

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Fireside Thanksgiving

By LEWIS F. HAVERMALE

And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they warmed themselves; and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. John 18:18

IT IS usually an occasion for thanksgiving when you can get a group of people together around a cozy fire on a cold night. The open fireplace of the living room, the cheery glow of the stove in the cross-roads country store or in the little red schoolhouse on the hill or in the farmers' Grange hall, were once symbols of American peace. Many a problem has been talked through in a democratic exchange of ideas about some fireside.

Yet too much of our Thanksgiving spirit is romance. Through the fire's rosy glow the memories of the past retain only the agreeable, and the future always looks good to us. It is easy then to shut out the hard cold world and in a pleasant drowsy state to thank God for his blessings to us—for our creature comforts, the trappings of civilization and the benefits of culture.

> We can dream the glad dreams over,
> Greet the old familiar friends
> In a land where there's no parting
> And the laughter never ends.
> All the gladness life has given,
> From a log fire we reclaim,
> And we're sorry for the watcher
> Who sees nothing there but flame.

Let us indulge this fancy and see what comes of it. Let us step into the palace of the high priest in Jerusalem and wander about for a few moments, trying to read what is in the minds of the people there as they gaze into the flames, and then to interpret their thoughts in the light of our own somewhat similar situations.

There in the outer courtyard a servant maid has kindled a fire, and the temple police and the Roman guard are building up a fine blaze. As an officer opens a door across the court, we lift our eyes to see two Jews drawing their chairs closer to a charcoal brazier in the palace room. One is the venerable Annas; the other is Caiaphas his son, the high priest. The officer pauses to thrust his prisoner into an alcove by the door, where he stands alone, shunned and shivering, but within sight of all. As we turn back toward the entrance, another lonely figure sidles timidly in, gives a quick glance all about, and then ventures within the circle of servants and officers and soldiers about the central fire, and warms himself.

I wonder what each of these watchers sees there besides the flame. What shall we see as we look on? For the setting is sadly familiar: the hireling and the employers, the civil servant and the military, the ecclesiastic and the frustrated churchman; and the Suffering Savior always awaiting judgment outside the friendly glow and warmth.

HIGH PRIEST'S REVERIE

As the world evaluates the reasons for thanksgiving, Annas and Caiaphas should stand at the top as the favored of both God and men. This was their palace. They had wealth and power. They were warming themselves at their own private charcoal fire. No one might intrude upon them. Servants passed in and out to minister to their comfort. Temple police took orders from them; culprits fawned before them; the minions of Caesar were loaned to them at their request. They were the titular heads of Judaism. Only Caiaphas might enter the Holy of Holies at the appointed time. Their lines had fallen unto them in pleasant places. They thanked God that they were not as those others about the wood fire in the courtyard, or even as this stubborn prisoner in the alcove awaiting their judgment.

But a draft from the court sent poisonous fumes from the brazier into their sensitive nostrils. A fleeting glance at that Man outside caused the poison in their hearts to ferment and boil. Within the week he had interfered with the concessionaires in the temple court; he had interrupted their monopoly of the animals for sacrifice. He had actually accused them of operating a racket, of being worse than "five-percenters" demanding a kickback for allocating special privileges. The unwashed mob had acclaimed him its leader—"Hosanna to the Son of David!" Even now his eyes were upon them, and when they turned back to the blue flames of the charcoal the dying embers of conscience seemed to say:

> The Age is weary with work and gold;
> And high hopes wither, and memories wane;
> On hearths and altars the fires are dead;
> But *that* brave faith hath not lived in vain.
> (*Frances Brown*)

Glancing across the fire of coals toward the more attractive quarters of Caiaphas' palace, the officers for a moment thought enviously of the lives of those in the higher brackets. "It must be wonderful to have so great control over people, and to have the tithe to

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live on. . . . Yet they look anything but happy now! After all I'd rather be a Roman citizen. Of course, we're not so popular at the moment. . . . "

The little maidservant came in with a fresh supply of fuel, and one of the soldiers made a pass at her, and all of them laughed when, with graceful skill born of necessary practice, she eluded him and went her way. "It seems that that fellow ashivering over in the alcove is more unpopular than we are, though, and yet he is a Jew born. Funny thing! he don't resist and yet he don't seem to be afraid. Sort of kingly-like. They tell me he brought the Capernaum centurion's orderly out of a fit, even without going up to his house. . . . Must be something to be thankful for to have your wife and household with you over here in this God-forsaken country. I'll be glad to get back to Italy and set up mine again."

The Jewish temple police had mixed emotions. Their duties were civil only, but that threw them into the company of the Romans all too often. "These heathen Romans act as if they own the world! A man can't call his home his own when they're around. Occupation forces, and in my own country! . . . We've got a cinch if we only knew it, working for the high priest and the Sanhedrim. But for a while I found myself wishing that that fellow over there *were* the Messiah! I'd like to see him handle the Romans like he handled us on Sunday. . . .

THE SERVANT'S MUSINGS

Whether we begin with primitive man or with the slave, the serf and the wage-earner, the upward struggle toward comfort and culture has been long and slow and painful. Sometimes the inner discontent and humiliation have been harder to bear than the physical privations. Sidney Lanier says somewhere, "It takes two things to make a home: music and an open fire." The Jerusalem housemaids of whom the Gospel writers tell us would scarcely consider their lot a happier one than that of these gathered about the fire in the courtyard. It is true that there are degrees of prestige to be found even among servants; and to be employed by the wealthy ecclesiastic, and to build fires for the men in uniform, might be cited as reasons for thankfulness. Much of our discontent is caused by matching our situations with that of the higher-ups rather than with that of the lower-downs. The perennial internecine conflicts of modern employees, for instance the A.F.L. and the C.I.O., might calm down a bit were the malcontents to take stock of their gains in the last half-century or, perhaps, catch a glimpse of Europe's man with the hoe or Asia's emaciated peasants or Siberia's war slaves, or even America's one-black-man-in-ten.

The maidservant put down her load of fagots by the Roman officers and went on through the door into the inner hall with her charcoal briquettes. "Will there never be any end to this?" she thought to herself. "Is my whole life to be taken up with tending fires for fresh charcoal into a glow. The high priest dismissed others? Never a fireside of my own?" She glanced up impatiently at the shivering figure by the doorway. He smiled at her.

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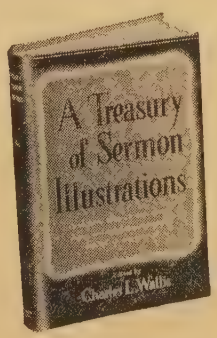

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She hurried in to Caiaphas, knelt down to blow the her with a curt, "Begone now!" "It's a chilly world indeed," she felt as she quickly obeyed. But as she passed the Man again she heard him say, "He who is near me is near the fire." That was a strange way to talk. "He is probably the coldest person in the palace —or is he? Maybe he meant warm in heart." The high priest was cold and calculating. The soldiers were cold and scheming. This man was respectful but friendly. "And come to think of it, the children last Sunday seemed thrilled to be near him, singing his praises. . . . Now if I could only have *that* kind of man and a home of my own, how thankful I would be, even if it had only one room and a fireplace!"

PETER'S CONSCIENCE

Peter was at a loss. He could not understand where he had been in error or what had brought him here. Earlier that night in the upper room he had been happy in the company of the Master and the eleven. Victory had seemed so near. Soon they would all be sharing with Jesus in delivering the world from its poverty, its oppression and its sorrows. Then had come one shock after another. All the things which had crowded in upon his heart as reasons for such thankfulness as he had never known had evaporated like the morning dew, and then settled like the white frost of winter all about him. He was thankful that his impetuosity had not cost him his life when he had drawn his sword to resist in the garden. From afar off he had followed Jesus to this place. The hardest thing in the world was just to wait and wonder. He gazed into the blazing fire.

The maidservant paused before him. "You are one of his followers!" she cried. "I saw you with him last Sunday in the temple. La la! How you did clear out the Gentile's court!" "I am not his follower!" denied Peter, and looked for comfort into the fire. But it said: "The branch that beareth not good fruit is cut off and burned." The group about the fire looked at Peter curiously. "You are his disciple indeed! I remember seeing you with him in Galilee." "It is not so," Peter denied, edging away from the fire, for the flames seemed to repeat, "Send Lazarus, that he may touch my tongue with a drop of water, lest I die in this torment." But a Roman soldier blocked his way and brought him back to the fire where he could observe Peter's features more clearly. "You lie!" he said. "I saw you with him in the garden yonder. You are the very one who lopped off the ear of my kinsman with your sword." Frightened now in truth, Peter denied it again with an oath. But thanks be to God, the officer entered the outer door and called, "Attention! At the third cockcrow the prisoner must be brought to trial." Peter was flung back toward the fire, and with the flame, conscience spoke: "It were better that he cut off his tongue and cast it into the fire, than that the whole body be cast into everlasting fire." Just then the rooster in the vine over the breezeway announced the dawn, the soldiers came to attention, seized Jesus and marched out. Peter caught the Master's pitying glance and rushed through the outer gate trying to hold back great heartbroken sobs.

Frederick Brown Harris once wrote me in his Christmas greetings: "An open fire brings near far places and friendly faces kept now but in memory. Lost loves and faded hopes all come trooping back idealized and beautified, for an open fire is a place for romance and poetry." So it may be that though centuries have come and gone since Peter warmed his hands by the fire while Jesus stood alone shivering in the cold, we may see the outcome of those events and cherish memories of forgiveness, and the restoration of friendliness to faces, and the revealing of the divine love, and the revived hopes of mankind. We are too much like Peter. We are thankful with church and state and industry for unsurpassed wealth and opportunity. We are thankful with employer and employee for hearthside and home, together with all the comforts and good living of our modern day. Perhaps we are not ready as yet to admit with the One yonder in the cold shadows that "life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that a man possesseth." It may be that, as to old Scrooge sitting by his feeble fire, the Ghost of the Past must come and lay his hand upon our frozen heart and lead us into humble homes to hear some crippled Tiny Tim in his prayer of praise and thanksgiving, before we are willing to say, "God bless us everyone!" But may the day be hastened when we shall bring them all into that circle of charm and warmth—the classes and the masses, the nations and the races, the churches and the institutions. Most important of all, let us bring Him into the primary unit of them all, the homes of the world; for to be near him is to be near the fire.

Lincoln and the Clergy

Just before the election of 1856 Mr. Lincoln became anxious to know how the ministers and churchmen of Springfield were going to vote. A careful canvass of the city was made. All but three of the ministers and a large majority of the church members were against him and his attitude toward slavery. Drawing forth a pocket New Testament, Mr. Lincoln said to a friend, "I have carefully read the Bible, and I do not so understand this book." And then, with trembling voice and his cheeks wet with tears, he continued: "I know there is a God, and that he hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that his hand is in it. If he has a place and work for me—and I think he has —I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right, because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and Christ and reason say the same; and they will find it so. Douglas doesn't care whether slavery is voted up or down, but God cares, and humanity cares, and I care; and with God's help I shall not fail. I may not see the end; but it will come, and I shall be vindicated; and these men will find that they have not read their Bibles aright."

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26	36.78	49.95	40.28	55.23	43.48	60.00
27	38.21	51.83	41.93	57.41	45.33	62.51
28	39.75	53.83	43.68	59.73	47.33	65.20
29	41.41	55.96	45.58	62.23	49.43	68.01
30	43.16	58.23	47.61	64.88	51.71	71.06
31	45.03	60.63	49.76	67.71	54.16	74.31
32	47.00	63.15	52.05	70.73	56.78	77.83
33	49.16	65.88	54.56	74.01	59.61	81.58
34	51.40	68.75	57.20	77.45	62.63	85.60
35	53.83	71.83	60.03	81.13	65.88	89.91
40	68.83	90.68	77.68	103.96	86.46	117.13
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Allhallow E'en

A Sermon for Children by John H. Blacklidge

DO you know how Halloween gets its name? It gets its name from the fact that it comes the day before November 1. For hundreds of years the first of November has been celebrated by Christians as the day of all the saints,—All Saints' Day. In England this day used to be called *Allhallow,* the "day of all the holy ones," and the *evening before* Allhallow was called *Allhallow e'en.* In time, this was shortened to Halloween.

Of course you boys and girls know a good deal about Halloween. But do you know that originally the only Christian thing about it was its name? Everything else connected with it today has been borrowed from peoples who had customs different from those of Christianity.

Take the idea of having a bonfire. Was that a Christian custom? No, it wasn't. Long ago, in England, there lived a group of people called the Druids. In the fall, about this time of year, they were in the habit of lighting fires in honor of the sungod, in thanksgiving for the harvest of crops. This fall festival of the Druids came at about the same time as the Christian Halloween. The Druids also believed that, of all the nights in the year, there was a special one on which ghosts and witches were most likely to wander about. As the years went by, Christians followed these customs of lighting bonfires and talking about ghosts and witches, and made them a part of their Halloween.

Do you boys and girls like to eat nuts on Halloween? And do you ever put apples in a tub or pail and duck for them? Did these practices originally have anything to do with a Christian festival? No, they didn't. They were adopted from the Romans, who delighted in eating nuts and ducking for apples as part of their harvest festival.

These practices were all borrowed from peoples who had religion and customs different from those of Christianity. Even so, there is nothing wrong with them. They are all good fun. You can go right ahead enjoying them. But consider this: Even though, in the past, Christians have taken over for Halloween many interesting customs from other peoples, without any harm coming of it, let us be careful today that we do not follow, as part of our Halloween, customs which could be harmful to others. It is one thing to have a good time, but quite another to do the rough pranks which some boys and girls do on Halloween. You know the deeds which are sometimes thought great fun but which are really harmful to people personally or to their property.

If you want to tell ghost stories, crack nuts, duck for apples and do other things like that, go right ahead. But don't stoop to any deeds that would hurt others. Remember, Halloween is the night before the day of all saints!

JOHN H. BLACKIDGE has held pastorates in Syracuse and New York city. He is now an assistant at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Baltimore.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

THOMAS J. GIBBS, JR., First Christian, Neosho, Mo. "Christianity's Answer to Modern Pessimism." John 1:46—"Nathanael said to him, Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see."

A. C. BROOKS, Third Christian, Indianapolis, Ind. "Freedom Is Where God Is." II Cor. 3:1-6, 17-18—"The Lord means the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is open freedom" (Moffatt)

D. W. CHARLTON, Methodist, Goldsboro, N. C. "The Light that Never Fails." Isa. 60:2—". . . Yet the Eternal shines out upon you, his splendor on you gleams." Isa. 2:5—"Let us live by the light of the Eternal." (Moffatt)

CHARLES F. WISHART, president emeritus, College of Wooster, Ohio. "The Time of the Almond Blossom." Jer. 1:11—"Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said Jehovah unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I watch over my word to perform it."

J. R. BROKHOFF, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Atlanta, Ga. "Today's Youth—Tomorrow's World." Josh. 24:15—"Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

A. GORDON NASBY, Edison Park, Chicago. "The Way to Forgiveness." Luke 24:46-48—"The Scriptures said that Christ should suffer as he had done, and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance leading to the forgiveness of sin should be preached to all the heathen in his name. You are to be witnesses to all this, beginning at Jerusalem."

HAROLD C. DE WINDT, West-Park Presbyterian, New York city. "Do the Best You Can." Eccles. 9:10—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

ANDREW PERRIN BURTON, First Baptist, Rensselaer, N. Y. "The Knack of Getting Into Trouble." Acts 4:3 (R.S.V.)—"And they arrested them and put them in custody until the morrow."

Pulpit Post

The Preacher's Day

SIR: Western Christian civilization became a lost cause in North America in 1865, in Europe in 1918, in Asia (except perhaps India) in 1927, in Africa in 1948. The preacher's job then is to strive to enlist disciples who will bridge from present decadence to future renaissance. To accomplish this the preacher must do two things: First, he must give enough soporifics and opiates to the smugly respectable and comfortable to keep them from becoming too restless lest they give him the customary prophetic treatment of lynching. Second, he must seek out the alert persons and guide them to greater awareness of our problems, help them to fuller mental, emotional and spiritual maturity. These persons then may become the surviving remnant in whose consecrated living God may rest his cause. For it is true today as yesterday, "the stone which the builders rejected" still is the cornerstone. Consecrated persons and minorities, in this community and that, seem now the sole source of light to shed upon tomorrow's darkness and to carry the hope of the ages. Thus today is one of the most thrilling of times for a preacher.

Hope Congregational, Sturgeon Bay, Wis. — Emerson W. Harris.

Comments

SIR: I have been a reader of The Pulpit for a good many years, but have never taken the time to commend the publishers for the excellent periodical of contemporary preaching. The August and September issues were particularly stimulating. While I find something of value in every issue, I felt that these two numbers were unusually helpful.

Chicago Northern District, The Methodist Church, Chicago, Ill. — Weldon E. Bradburn, District Superintendent.

SIR: . . . Sermons in The Pulpit are not as helpful as they used to be. I would like more emphasis on *timeless* and less on *timely*. Could you conduct a poll to see which preachers prefer?

Edgewood Presbyterian, Birmingham, Ala. — Hall Barrett.

SIR: . . . The sermons by Drs. Lunger and Hendricks in the August Pulpit are both fundamental and thought-provoking.

National Association of Manufacturers, New York, N. Y. — Earl Bunting, Managing Director.

Wants Fewer Repeaters

SIR: Your "For the Record" in the July issue of The Pulpit prompts me to write you a number of thoughts concerning the periodical which I have been pondering from time to time during the past decade.

First, let me assure you that I like The Pulpit, else I would not have been reading it for twelve years. I do think, however, that it could serve its average reader more fully if a few rules (my own, of course!) were observed.

Primarily, I wish that no preacher would appear in print oftener than once every three years. Surely there must be at least 200 ministers capable of doing stuff of Pulpit quality who can be found. As a corollary of this point, I would like to see no so-called "name preachers" included. That may sound like a strange request, but I believe it has merit. We can all read the published works of almost every outstanding Protestant minister. And we want to, of course, for in our profession we look to them for invaluable guidance. Perhaps my thought has reference to the use which we ministers make of The Pulpit. Is it a source of transferrable ideas and illustrations, or is it a magazine to tone up the minister's zeal and outlook? Since I think it is most importantly the latter, I believe we could all be helped by a broader cross section of American Protestant preaching without repetition and without sermons by prominent men whose works are available to us from other sources.

Another matter which concerns me is the obvious plagiarism which sometimes appears. I have noticed it often! None of us is completely original, of course. But to lift whole paragraphs from someone else's sermon without acknowledgment, places the Protestant ministry in a vulnerable position. I know you cannot be expected to be a policeman on such matters. You must rely on the writer's honesty. It would strengthen our professional standing if each of us resolved to make such honesty the keynote in our use of ideas which have come to us from our brethren.

Let me close by saying that I like "Pulpit Calendar" and that I find the biographical notes with individual sermons most helpful.

First Congregational, South Hadley, Mass. — Ralph H. Winn.

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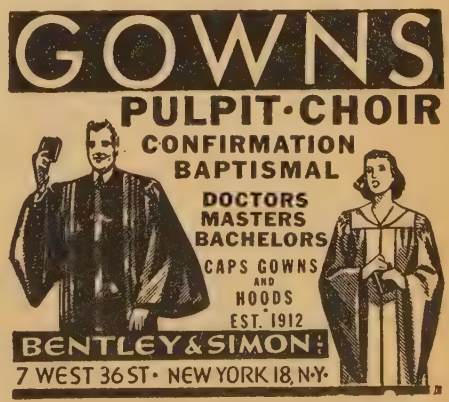


On Preaching Stewardship

By STUART LEROY ANDERSON

WHAT is the minister's job as a preacher, in stressing stewardship? Surely there is a sense in which there is nothing else to preach about. The only responsibility of a Christian preacher is to "offer men Christ," as John Wesley expressed it. When we do that effectively, it issues in life commitment, which is what we mean by stewardship. So, in the broad sense, stewardship will be at the heart of every good sermon.

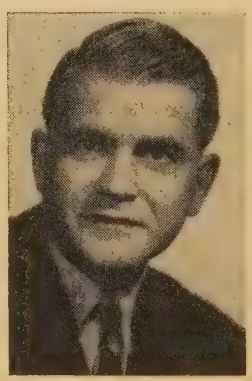
Yet within the church as a whole, the word "stewardship" is not a popular word. Most people think of it only in terms of a financial program. Most ministers do not like to "ask for money," so they shy away from preaching about it. The emphasis on stewardship in the church year is associated with the underwriting of the annual budget, so folks come to think of it as an effort to separate them from their money. Is it any wonder that, when a "stewardship sermon" is announced, most of us expect our smallest congregations? Therefore the most appropriate Sunday to stress stewardship will be Easter Sunday instead of the start of the every-member canvass. An appropriate title for a stewardship sermon will be "Evading the Easter Imperative" instead of "You Can't Take It With You."

Too often, we try to get people's money before we get their commitment to the causes for which the money will be used. Then the church is accused of "always asking for money," and the lukewarm convert has found another excuse for staying away. The only kind of money the church ought to ask for, or in the long run can count on receiving, is the money that represents the stored-up energy and life of people who are committed to Christ. Every good sermon deals with some aspect of that.

SPECIAL EMPHASIS

Of course there are times for special emphasis in the church year, and every church ought to have a time when the relationship between a man's commitment to Christ and his financial investment in the church is made plain. Then perhaps there will be a special sermon on the subject. Every preacher will emphasize it in his own way, making clear that the subscriptions will be the inevitable result of profound Christian experience. John Versteeg put it well in an excellent little book entitled *Save Money:* "One who is after subscriptions is intent on the contribution, but one who is after stewardship is intent on the commitment. . . . To use stewardship to get the funds we need rather than to get the religion we need is to make the word of God of no effect through our position. To ask how much money do we raise rather than what sort of givers de we produce is to secularize the gospel."

One of the reasons why some of us fail to cultivate genuine stewardship attitudes in our congregation is because we have counted too much on the once-a-year emphasis of an every-



member canvass. Stewardship education is not something that can be taken in occasional high-powered doses, like vitamin pills. It must be part of the week-by-week diet. This is true not only because the stewardship message is a basic part of the gospel we preach, but because of the facts of psychology.

Everyone who has worked in community chest circles knows that the whole conception of financing welfare and character-building agencies by means of one "super-fund" drive each year is undergoing profound re-examination. It seems to overlook principles of psychology which are well known to every salesman in the commercial world. It is a basic law of advertising that, if you want to sell merchandise, you have to emphasize one principal selling point at a time. A new model automobile will be presented to the public as "more economical," or "more modern," or "more comfortable," but not all these points will be sold at the same time. The psychologist tells us that when we lump everything together in one effort we weaken our appeal by diffusion.

This basic law ought to be memorized by every church finance committee. It can teach us something about the place of the "regular pledge" emphasis in the church budget. It means that, although the "separated portion" or "pledge" can provide the "floor" under the church budget, there ought to be no "ceiling" except as one is established by the personal commitments and resources of each contributor. In other words, there must be plenty of opportunity for extra offerings, or for "project giving" which appeals to the personal interests of each contributor. Here is where the pulpit can, and must, take the lead.

THE CORNERSTONE

After fourteen years in the parish ministry I have no doubt that the regular pledge ought to be the cornerstone of an adequate church financial program. Every church member ought to be expected to give regularly and systematically. It is his recognition of a regular stewardship obligation to God. It gives a base of anticipated income on which a year's operations can be planned. But a pledge is not a device to protect the giver against special appeals. When it is regarded as such it undermines the whole philosophy of Christian stewardship, and delivers the church financial program over to a kind of legalism that is destructive of Christian values.

There is no real giving within the Christian fellowship without the warmth of generosity, the lovingkindness of man to man. In *Love's Labour's Lost,* Shakespeare poses the fundamental question to which everyone struggling with problems of church finance must face up—"Who can sever love from charity?" Every time we try to get people's money before we get their commitment to the causes for which the money will be used we try to sever love from charity. It cannot be done. In the long run the reservoirs of charity will dry up unless they are fed by the springs of love. That takes church finance out of the realm of promotion and puts it in the realm of theology. It is in the year-round emphasis on the "theology of giving" that a minister finds his job, as a preacher, in stressing stewardship.

There are a few suggestions that I have found practical in dealing with the financial program of the local

STUART LEROY ANDERSON is president of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Calif. He was formerly pastor of First Congregational, Long Beach, Calif. He serves his denomination as vice-president of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

church. In the first place, the personal commitment of the minister is always the key to the spiritual life of the church. One of the ways his commitment becomes manifest is through the minister's own benevolences. Every minister ought to be at least a tither, and his people ought to know that he is. There is no other place that a minister can start planning his church's financial strategy except with himself. The only strong missionary churches I know are those which have been, or are being, served by ministers who believe in and bring the missionary causes to their people. Churches that do little or nothing for others are generally led by shepherds who shield their sheep instead of leading them. Incidentally, sheep that are sheared regularly always produce finer wool!

THE FIRST GIFT

The only proper way to start a financial campaign in a church is for the minister to make the first gift. It ought to be as generous, in terms of resources, as any other gift. We cannot ask others to do something that we are not doing ourselves. There are ministers who do not pledge to their own church budget on the ground that their salaries are paid out of that budget. To me that point of view is unrealistic, and certainly it sets a poor example. Every member of the church, including the minister, ought to begin his giving with the needs of his own church.

GUIDANCE NEEDED

In the second place, I believe we ought always to make a suggestion regarding how much a person should give in relation to his income. People need guidance at this point. They want to do their fair share, but they do not know how to arrive at that fair share. Most people do not hoard their money. They fritter it away on unimportant and less important things. Our job is to help them invest it wisely in causes that will bring them the greatest abiding satisfactions. When they become concerned about the Christian enterprise, they will want to have as large a share in it as possible. Most denominations provide helpful tables of suggested giving in relation to income. With all the other demands that are made on people, they have a right to some guidance as to their fair share of the church budget.

In the third place, I have always favored the unified budget or single envelope system, against the double envelope system. Any attempt to distinguish between current expenses and missions has seemed unreal. It is the *total* Christian enterprise that we ask people to support. The real problem is to get the budget makers to maintain a proper balance between local needs and needs beyond the immediate parish. In the long run, unless people are led to see the world mission of the church as the necessary and logical extension of the local ministry, their giving is not well grounded and will not be well sustained.

In the fourth place, we must find more ways to personalize the needs. To encourage reading of missionary literature; to make every sermon a "stewardship" sermon, in outcome at least, because it stresses not only the "what" but the "how" of the Christian life; to bridge the gap in people's minds between tragedy in Asia and their personal interests; to paint for them a picture of the world's need and then to give them a "near-end" where they can take hold and lift—these are all basic parts of the stewardship enterprise. Nothing is important to anyone until it becomes "personal" with him. Unless people see that the world church is just as much their responsibility and concern as their local church, they do not see the truth. When they do see it, the primary problem is no longer financial.

In the fifth place, we must never feel that our job as ministers is to protect our people from special appeals, as though that shielding were necessary to maintain our local program. I do not believe in a multitude of special offerings, so that the church service becomes a promotional meeting instead of a place for the worship of God. There are churches where people are afraid to come to public worship lest they run into a special offering. Wherever possible, needs that can be foreseen should be written into the unified budget. But now and then we must give people an opportunity to go the second mile. It is in doing the extra, unexpected labor of love that we save our souls.

CUMULATIVE PROCESS

In general it is true that the more one gives to Christian causes as a whole, the more one will give through his own church. It is a cumulative process. Giving is a habit. There is no competition in people's minds between giving the preacher's salary or the church school expenses, and supporting a missionary in India or feeding starving children in Greece. There is no limit to the amount the American people will give to charity, provided the cause is forcefully and convincingly presented. Our job as preachers is to keep before them the causes that we believe are most important to the coming of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

As ministers we must keep people sensitive to their own favored position in comparison with that of others of God's children. When we help a man to decide to invest some of his resources in something of lasting value, we do him a real favor. If we fail to bring the need to him so that he fritters away his substance on lesser things, we are responsible. In my ministry I have had many people refuse to give as I thought they should to projects for which I was pleading. I have never had one who did not honor and respect my right, indeed my responsibility, to present the need. Since people respond more readily to the visual than to the vital, our responsibility is to see that the vital is visualized. That is the minister's year-round job, as a preacher, in stressing stewardship.

● *We Need to Climb to Higher Ground*

AN English aviator, with provisions in his plane, was on his way from England to Alaska. Suddenly he heard a noise as of gnawing. Startled, he thought to himself: "What if an animal is gnawing at the gasline?" An attempt to land, he realized, would mean sudden death. In his extremity, the aviator remembered that animals are unable to live at a high altitude. So he turned his plane heavenward and climbed. Then he listened; there was no more noise. Presently he piloted his plane back to a normal altitude.

After a safe landing, the aviator made a search. He discovered in the rear of the plane a huge field rat, which obviously had been gnawing at the gasline. Had he not climbed heavenward, his plane would have been wrecked and he would have suffered death.

Today, gnawing at the heartstrings of individuals and of nations are things that cause death. It is high time for us to turn our thoughts heavenward and climb to higher ground.—*A. Thad. Persons, Junction City Baptist, Talbotton, Ga.*

● *Christ Still The Answer*

AT the end of one of the main downtown streets in Minneapolis, I came upon a huge painted billboard. On the left-hand section was a painting of Christ and at the right were the words: "Christ is the Answer in the Atomic World." It was one of the most striking signs I have seen. But I couldn't tell why until I realized that the billboard artist had outdone himself in painting a most serene face of Christ. There was the sign of our times—"atomic world" contrasted with the serenity of Christ. Yet Christ can hardly be said to have lived a life free from turmoil. On the contrary, Christ was serene not because he avoided or shut out the trouble of the world, but because he overcame the world. "Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."— *Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

Advance Through United Action

By WALTON W. RANKIN

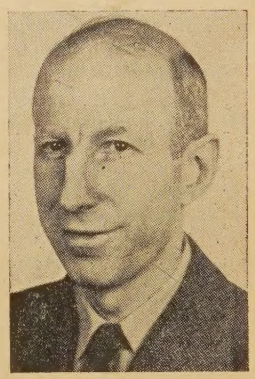
BY FAR the most important event in recent American church history will be the formation of the new National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America at a convention in Cleveland, Nov. 28-Dec. 1. This meeting is the culmination and symbol of the desire of Protestantism in America to gain strength through united action. The National Council has been well called the capstone in the arch of Christian cooperation and the Cleveland convention, which will be attended by more than 5,000 delegates and visitors, will be one of the greatest convocations of Protestant and Orthodox churches ever held in this country.

Official representatives of at least 27 Protestant and Eastern Orthodox communions with a constituency of more than 26 million will share in the creation of the new National Council. The formation of the National Council does not involve the merger of denominations; it calls for the uniting of interdenominational agencies. The plan is for cooperation, not organic union. The interdenominational agencies to be merged include: The Federal Council of Churches, the Foreign Missions Conference, the Home Missions Council, the International Council of Religious Education, the Missionary Education Movement, the United Council of Church Women, the United Stewardship Council, and the National Protestant Council on Higher Education.

I

The rise of the National Council comes in response to a demand from the churches for further unification and coordination of their national interdenominational agencies. The leaders of the interdenominational agencies have had the vision to see that effective integration accomplishes far more than uncoordination. The creation of the council therefore ought to be regarded not as an end but as a new beginning calling for all-out endeavor on the part of the constituent churches. Let the Cleveland meeting be the occasion for a summons to prayer, to reconsecration, to a renewal of zeal, and to the making of realistic efforts to achieve greater religious vitality among Protestant and Orthodox church people throughout our land.

The real problem of Christianity in the modern world is whether men and women can find, in the Christian Church, inspiration and direction in such a complicated world as ours. It is evident that the Christian movement, at least in its cooperating elements, is seeking to make the adjustments needed for such service. And the test of the church's vitality is in the degree of its ability to adjust itself creatively in its thought and operations to meet the new needs. The creation of the National Council is a milestone—one of the most outstanding milestones—in the history of this progress of Christianity in the meeting of the needs of people in the new age.



Until the 19th century Protestantism was concerned, in great measure, in establishing the basic Reformation principle of freedom for the individual and the group. Slowly, and in the light of the crisis of world needs, the resultant separate churches of the Reformation and the post-Reformation periods began to feel their common responsibility in carrying out the Christian missionary enterprise and in maintaining a united Christian impact on society. The immensity of the task and the weakness of individual and unrelated attempts to master the task have led to the making of steadily increasing efforts to provide maximum mutual encouragement and support through cooperation without surrendering the right to differ in matters of creed and polity.

Indeed, an analogy may be drawn here from the field of biology. It has been a prevailing law that sympathy, mutual help, or union between members of the same species for attack or defense has been a decisive factor in the growth and development of life. Mutual help has been as much a fact of life as mutual competition.

But in human society a solution must be found in which the individual shall not be sacrificed to the whole, or the whole to the individual. It is on this principle or organization that the National Council of Churches rests. The attitude toward the constituent denominations is not that of William Penn in his remark: "Our religions are like our hats, the differences are in the trimmings."

II

Lack of cooperation has been costly to Protestantism. While we respect the sincerity of both Luther and Zwingli at the conference arranged by Bucer at Marburg, the disagreement between the two great leaders had sad consequences for the future of the Protestant movement. Zwingli's unfortunate death at Kappel and the defeat of the numerically superior forces of the Swiss Protestants as a result of their lack of cohesion testify to the disastrous effects of disharmony among the adherents of the Reformed faith. Again the antagonism between Calvinists and Lutherans enabled the Church of Rome in the Counter-Reformation to regain much of central Europe which should have been Protestant by right. The will of the people was for the Reformed faith. Through the disputes of the Protestant leaders, clergymen and princes, the lands were lost to the Jesuits, who had the support of the Hapsburgs.

In our own day and in our own country the effects of lack of cooperation have been shown in the failure of the Protestant churches to maintain the position and prestige they had in the days of the founding fathers. The whole Christian enterprise in America has been weakened by the fact that individual communions have too often emphasized their particular interests without regard for what others were doing. This tendency toward competition has done serious injury to the Protestant churches and to the whole Christian movement as well. An unfavorable impression has been made upon the public and the churches have failed to command the resources that would have been available if all had been focusing on common objectives.

The Protestant loss has been the Roman Catholics' gain. Without recurring to the data assembled by Harold E. Fey in his *Christian Century* series, "Can Catholicism Win America?", we may say that, relatively at least, the Roman Catholic Church has made great gains upon Protestantism in dominating the spiritual and religious climate of America.

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Protestant disunity has cooperated with Catholic aggressiveness to give the latter new strength and prestige. Wherever there is a religious vacuum left by Protestant neglect or mutual competition, Roman Catholicism is ready to rush in and usurp the field.

But more important than the problem raised by Roman Catholic aggressiveness is the consideration that there are important needs to be met if essential elements of Christianity are to survive in this country at all. Great unfinished tasks await us calling for the mobilization of all our spiritual insights and energies. For example, there are 15,000,000 boys and girls between the ages of five and seven not reached by religious education. This poses a challenge which can be met only through a united effort in which energies and resources are pooled and channeled in a single direction.

Again, there are needed throughout America at least 5,000 new Protestant church buildings and 10,000 new church school buildings if we are to have minimum standards of space and equipment for our Christian worship, education and service. Many of these must be erected in new communities. The need for them is urgent and it can best be met by the Protestant churches acting in common.

In more general terms, such areas as the home and family, labor relationships, economic issues, interracial fellowship, missionary responsibility, a deeper sense of stewardship, international justice and good will, and a true and lasting world peace, all demand the coordination of our best efforts in seeking to apply Christian principles to these human problems.

The coordination of all this work in the new National Council will give added power and effectiveness for united Christian advance. Christian influence will be exerted through cooperative action at points of common interest and concern. Without waiting for the consummation of organic unions—and it is painfully obvious that the movement for organic union has suffered serious setbacks of late—the churches will find themselves working together in thousands of places, exercising their combined influence in fields where no one denomination acting alone could be effective.

III

From the standpoint of the local church, the coming of the new National Council will mean the bringing of many benefits. Through relationship to the National Council through its national denominational body, each local church will have increased influence and outreach in the community. Furthermore, it will have more effective access than hitherto to the best ideas, methods and material for use in its church program. Also, the total work of the denominations to which the local church is affiliated will be given added significance.

Working together, the interdenominational councils and conferences which have been guiding our cooperating activities in missions, education and social ministries will command in the future new resources of both leadership and financial strength. The consultations and testimonies made possible by the formation of the new National Council will strengthen every church member in his effort to exalt Christ in our land. Careful coordination and the elimination of duplication of effort and activity will certainly result in greater efficiency. Economies made at some points will permit expansion of program at others.

Cooperative action has been found effective and rich in reflected benefits to local churches and communities. Out of the total experience of cooperation among Protestant churches and Protestant agencies has arisen the conviction among Protestant leaders that a great further venture in cooperation, such as the new National Council, will bring decisive advantages. The functions of the interdenominational agencies will be provided for and augmented.

Within the whole council the work hitherto performed by the independent agencies will be clearly assigned under the new grouping. Nothing will be lost, much will be gained. The Central cooperative agency will facilitate the best use of personnel, time and energy for over-all strategy and advance. There will be an acceleration of growth of cooperation among communions. Churches will be brought together as never before. Laymen will have a stronger voice (provision has been made for the creation of a general department of laymen). There will be a larger number of official positions available for women and wider recognition of their work. In sum, the council will present an imposing structure of cooperative Christianity in America planning to work through a more effective instrument representing its united strength.

Dr. Edward Hughes Pruden, in his article on "My Response to the Pope's Invitation," in the March 1950 issue of The Pulpit, spoke for Protestants generally when he said:

"We cannot believe that the variety of approach to the vital relationship between God and man is any barrier to a thoroughly cooperative Christianity. It is the prayer of millions that the day may speedily come when a true spiritual unity among the followers of Christ may be realized, and a practical, cooperative arrangement for carrying on his program achieved."

IV

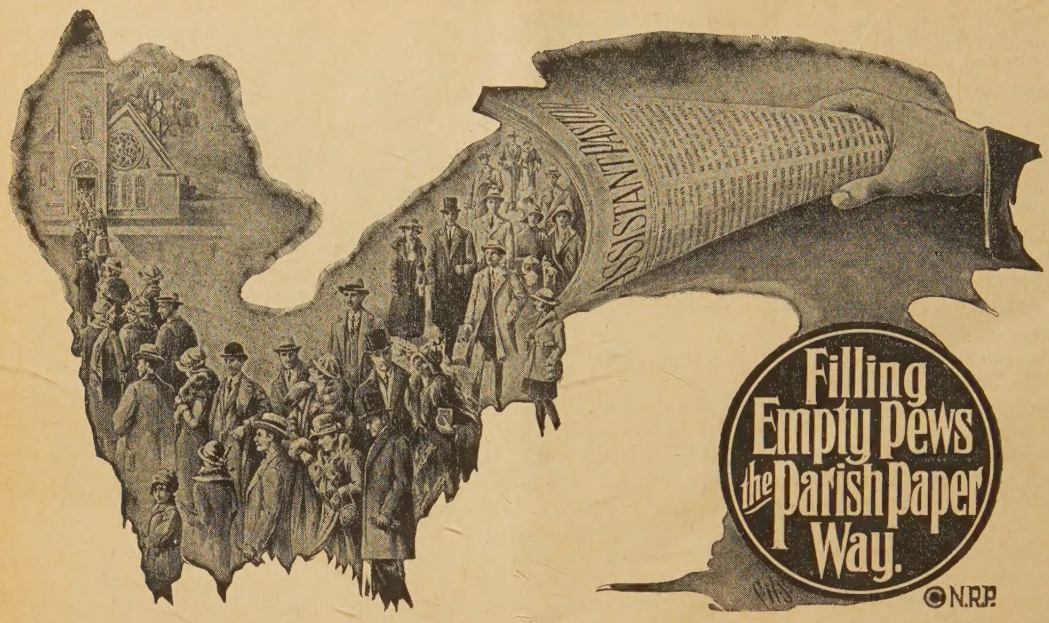
In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul portrays the church as an instrument of the unifying mission of Christ. As such, the apostle is convinced that the church itself must be united with Christ in a union as clearly knit together as the parts of a human body. But if the church is to unify the world it must be united within itself. Its leaders must work together harmoniously and effectively. Its members must be filled with a spirit of concord and help and serve one another in all the relations of life.

Paul had seen in Christianity that Jew and Gentile could be reconciled, that in Christ they could live together and work together as loving brethren." And back of this phenomenon he discerned a divine purpose and plan by which God was creating a new united humanity through Christ. "So richly has God lavished his grace upon us!" Paul exclaims (Eph. I, 9 ff, Moffatt) "He has granted us complete insight and understanding of the open secret of his will showing us how it was the purpose of his design so to order it in the fulness of the ages that all things in heaven and earth alike should be gathered up in Christ."

Thus Christ is to be the center in which all the conflicting forces of the world shall at last find their unity. Christ is the principle of union and the church his instrument whereby he will reconcile all things in heaven and earth. The day of this complete reconciliation is yet far off, but slowly and steadily mankind in the providence of God is making progress toward it. A great step in that progress will be the merging of forces at the Cleveland meeting. Let Nov. 28 to Dec. 1 be observed as red-letter days. Let prayers be offered for the blessing of God upon the meeting, that its work may prosper and bear rich fruit in bringing larger harmony and increased effectiveness to the Christian forces of America.

● *'Laymen Are My Saints'*

EVERY Saturday night in our Minneapolis papers we publish church advertisements for the coming Sunday. An interesting one appeared a few weeks ago in connection with our largest Presbyterian church. It is the practice of the minister there to give the title of his sermon and a brief explanation. This time he said: "Laymen Are My Saints," and explained: "Laymen are my saints. They, more than any other, have revealed the great Christian virtues. From them I have learned the meaning of devotion and courage. They have shown me what faith can do, what Christ can mean. They have ministered to me more than I have ever ministered to them."—*Bradshaw Mintener, Vice-President and General Counsel, Pillsbury Mills, Minneapolis, Minn.*



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